

Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims below will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A system for receiving and forwarding e-mail messages for a subscriber, the system comprising:

a server configured to be coupled to a network; and

an agent resident and operable on the ~~server~~; server.

~~wherein the agent is adapted~~ configured to compare ~~characteristics~~ a first characteristic of the e-mail ~~messages~~ messages, received for the ~~subscriber~~ subscriber, to specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, to generate a message ID for ~~each~~ an e-mail message that ~~contains~~ has a characteristic match, to send an alert message to the subscriber, the alert including the message ID, subscriber when the characteristic match is found, and to execute instructions ~~associated with the message ID received from the subscriber in response to the alert for forwarding of the e-mail message received for which a match was found.~~ that has the characteristic match, wherein the first characteristic is other than message sender information and message time information, the alert message includes the message ID, and the instructions are associated with the message ID and are received from the subscriber in response to the alert message.

2. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 1 wherein the ~~subscriber is alerted on finding a characteristic match by sending a~~ agent is further configured to send the alert message to a mobile device configured to be carried by the subscriber.

3. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 1 further comprising a human interface ~~whereby~~ configured to allow an operator ~~causes received and matched mail to cause the e-mail message that has the characteristic match to be forwarded to mail addresses an e-mail address~~ provided by the subscriber responding to the alert message by conversing with the operator via telephone.

4. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 1 further comprising a telephone menu system ~~whereby a~~ configured to allow the subscriber, responding to ~~an alert, may the alert message,~~ to perform one or more of the following actions: log in, identify messages, selected the e-mail message that has the characteristic match, select from recorded options, ~~and/or~~ and input information for forwarding ~~of identified messages. the e-mail message that has the characteristic match.~~

5. (Currently Amended) An e-mail server comprising:

an e-mail system ~~adapted for receiving and forwarding e-mail;~~ configured to receive and to forward e-mail messages; and

an agent ~~adapted~~ configured to compare ~~characteristics~~ a first characteristic of e-mail ~~messages~~ messages, received for ~~the subscriber~~ a subscriber, to specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the e-mail server, to generate a

message ID for each an e-mail message that ~~contains~~ has a characteristic match, to send an alert message to the subscriber when the characteristic match is found, ~~the alert including the message ID,~~ and to execute instructions ~~associated with the message ID received from the subscriber in response to the alert~~ for forwarding of the e-mail message ~~received for which a match was found.~~ that has the characteristic match, wherein the first characteristic is other than message sender information and message time information, the alert message includes the message ID, and the instructions are associated with the message ID and are received from the subscriber in response to the alert message.

6-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A method for receiving, filtering, and routing e-mail messages, ~~comprising steps of:~~ comprising:

(a) ~~prerecording~~ prerecording, on a mail ~~server~~ server, characteristics for the e-mail messages to be routed, the characteristics provided by a subscriber;

(b) ~~receiving messages~~ receiving, at the mail ~~server~~, an e-mail message addressed to the ~~subscriber at the mail server;~~ subscriber;

(c) ~~comparing characteristics~~ a first characteristic of ~~messages~~ the received e-mail message to the prerecorded characteristics provided by the ~~subscriber;~~ subscriber, the first characteristic being other than message sender information and message time information;

(d) ~~identifying and storing~~ storing, on the mail ~~server~~ messages server, the ~~received for the subscriber for which e-mail message if a characteristic match is found to~~ with one of the prerecorded characteristics;

(e) — ~~generating a message ID for each~~ the received e-mail message that contains a
if the characteristic match; match is found with the one of the prerecorded characteristics;

(f) — ~~alerting~~ sending an alert message to the subscriber ~~to the receipt of one or~~
~~more messages for which~~ when the characteristic match is found, the alert message including
the message ID;

(g) — receiving instructions ~~associated with the message ID~~ for forwarding the
~~stored messages~~ e-mail message that has the characteristic match, the instructions being the
associated with the message ID and being received from the subscriber in response to the
~~alert; alert message;~~ and

(h) — forwarding the ~~stored messages for which a~~ e-mail message that has the
characteristic match is found to destinations a destination according to the instructions
provided in response to the ~~alert; alert message.~~

10-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) An agent for processing e-mail messages, comprising:

a stored list of message characteristics provided by a subscriber;

a receiver ~~adapted for receiving~~ configured to receive an e-mail ~~messages~~ message
and ~~ascertaining to ascertain a first~~ message ~~characteristics~~ characteristic of the received
~~messages; e-mail message, the first message characteristic being other than message sender~~
information and message time information;

a comparator ~~adapted for comparing~~ configured to compare the first message
characteristics of the received e-mail messages with the stored list of message characteristics,

~~tagging those messages wherein the characteristics to tag the e-mail message if there is a~~
~~characteristic match, and generating to generate a message ID for each the e-mail message~~
~~that contains if there is the characteristic match;~~

~~an alert mechanism for alerting a configured to send an alert message to the subscriber~~
~~to the receipt of messages the e-mail message having characteristics matching the stored~~
~~characteristics; the characteristic match, the alert message including the message ID; and~~

~~a save facility adapted for storing matched messages against configured to store the e-~~
~~mail message having the characteristic match for future distribution instructions, the future~~
~~distribution instructions associated with the message ID and received from the subscriber in~~
~~response to the alert. alert message.~~

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) The agent of claim 13 further comprising a forwarding facility ~~for~~
~~retrieving and forwarding stored messages configured to retrieve and to forward the e-mail~~
~~message having the characteristic match from the save facility to destinations a destination~~
provided by the subscriber in response to the ~~alert. alert message.~~

17. (Currently Amended) The agent of claim 16 wherein the forwarding facility comprises a
human interface ~~for performing~~ configured to perform one or more of the following:
~~identifying messages identify the e-mail message having the characteristic match to be~~

retrieved, ~~retrieving~~ retrieve the identified ~~messages, and/or forwarding~~ e-mail message, and forward the identified ~~messages~~ e-mail message to ~~destinations~~ the destination provided to an operator by the subscriber.

18. (Currently Amended) The agent of claim 16 wherein the forwarding facility comprises an automated telephone menu system ~~adapted for providing~~ configured to provide choices to a the subscriber connecting to the forwarding facility by ~~telephone, wherein~~ telephone to allow the subscriber calling in ~~may~~ to identify ~~stored messages~~ the e-mail message to be forwarded, and the agent ~~will retrieve and forward~~ is configured to retrieve and forward the identified ~~messages~~ e-mail message to ~~destinations~~ the destination provided by the subscriber calling in response to the ~~alert~~. alert message.

19. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving a message for a subscriber;

comparing the message to ~~criteria~~; first criteria, the first criteria other than message sender information and message time information;

if the message matches the ~~criteria~~; first criteria, then generating a message ID and sending an alert including the message ID to the subscriber;

receiving a reply from the subscriber in response to the alert, the reply comprising instructions associated with the message ID; and

processing the message according to the instructions.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the message is an ~~email~~ e-mail message.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a notification message that identifies the received message and the first criteria matching the message.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the comparing step comprises filtering the message to determine if parts of the message meet the first criteria.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the first criteria are one or more of the following:___

_____message sender information;

_____message subject line ~~information;~~ information,

_____message body ~~information;~~ and/or information, and

_____message attachment ~~information;~~ information, wherein the comparing step further comprises comparing the message to second criteria, the second criteria being message sender information, and wherein the generating and sending step further comprises if the message matches the second criteria, then generating the message ID and sending the alert including the message ID to the subscriber.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert comprises at least a portion of the message.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a message sent to a pager.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a message sent to a phone.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the instructions comprise a command to forward the message to a new destination.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 27 wherein the new destination is one or more of the following:

- an e-mail address;
- a fax number;
- a telephone number;
- a mobile device;
- a hand-held computer;
- a notebook computer;
- a server computer; ~~and/or~~ and
- an Internet Service ~~Provider (ISP).~~ Provider.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the reply is received via one or more of the following entities:

- an operator;

a voice-response system;

a telephone call;

an auto attendant; ~~and/or~~ and

a mobile device.

30. (New) A system as in claim 1 wherein the first characteristic is at least one of message subject line information, message body information, and message attachment information, and wherein the agent is further configured to compare a second characteristic of the e-mail messages received for the subscriber to the specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, the second characteristic being message sender information.

31. (New) An e-mail server as in claim 5 wherein the first characteristic is at least one of message subject line information, message body information, and message attachment information, and wherein the agent is further configured to compare a second characteristic of the e-mail messages received for the subscriber to the specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, the second characteristic being message sender information.

32. (New) A method as in claim 9, wherein the first characteristic is at least one of message subject line information, message body information, and message attachment information, and further comprising comparing a second characteristic of the received e-mail message to

the prerecorded characteristics provided by the subscriber, the second characteristic being message sender information.

33. (New) A agent as in claim 13 wherein the first message characteristic is at least one of message subject line information, message body information, and message attachment information, and wherein the receiver is further configured to ascertain a second message characteristic of the received e-mail message, the second message characteristic being message sender information.